1: Hart & Pilling E-5 (1928-1954) 1960
OI20 Tiwi OI20

roos,[1] wildfowl, and other game, keen eyesight is essential, hence Tiwi men did very little hunting once they were past about forty-five, though they hated to admit their hunting days were over. The meat, fish, and game provided for the large household of an old man was obtained by the young men, and this was about the only thing an old man thought his sons or his step-sons were good for. Typically the young man, when he returned at nightfall with a kangaroo which he had spent most of the day tracking down and spearing, would ignore the old man and dump the carcass at the feet of his mother as if to say, "I brought this back for you, not for that old So and So."

As the women straggled back to camp toward sundown with the results of their day's gathering and the young hunters brought in their bags, cooking began and the main meal of the day (usually the only hot meal) was eaten. The Tiwi themselves had no doubt about the close relationship between plural marriage and good eating. "If I had only one or two wives I would starve," the head of a large household once told the missionary who was preaching against plural marriage, "but with my present ten or twelve wives I can send them out in all directions in the morning and at least two or three of them are likely to bring something back with them at the end of the day, and then we can all eat." This was a realistic appraisal of the economic situation and it is to be noted that he put the emphasis on the food obtained by the women gatherers rather than that supplied by the male hunters. Based on the observations of 1928-29, it would appear that the Tiwi ate pretty well, especially in the larger households. Kangaroo and other marsupials, and some of the larger lizards (for example, the goanna) were very plentiful in the bush, as were fish and turtles and dugong on the coasts and wild geese in many districts. But all these were extras or dividends; the staple everyday foods were the vegetable foods gathered day after day in apparently unending quantities by the women. For most months of the year there was always plenty of *kwoka*, a porridgelike dish prepared by soaking and mashing the small nuts of a native palm. These nuts grew in such quantity that in every large camp baskets or dishes of *kwoka*, at various stages of preparation, were always available, even for midnight snacks if anybody woke up hungry. *Kwoka* was about as dull and tasteless as Scotch porridge, but equally filling, and naked small boys full of *kwoka* had stomachs distended like balloons. In the wet season the place of *kwoka* was taken by *kolema*, a yam whose ripening and growing season was much shorter than that of the nuts from which *kwoka* was made. It was on the abundance of the *kolema* yams during January and February that the Tiwi supported the more elaborate of their collective ceremonials.

The abundance of these and other vegetable foods, plus the ample supply of game and fish in many places, meant that under aboriginal conditions the Tiwi lived at a food-consumption level much further above the near-

[1] Actually there are no kangaroos on Melville and Bathurst Islands; the chief meat animal is a slightly smaller species of marsupial technically called the wallaby. As the distinction is important only to zoologists, and as many of the so-called kangaroos in American zoos are in fact wallabies, we prefer to use the more familiar word.

1: Hart & Pilling E-5 (1928-1954) 1960
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starvation level than was the case with many of the mainland tribes.[3] Even to talk about the Tiwi in near-starvation terms seems quite incongruous, for there was an abundance of native food available the whole year around and their only problem was to collect or catch it. We regard the development of their large multiple-wife household as essentially their own evolutionary solution to the problem of finding the most efficient unit of food production. Abundant food was there in the bush in its raw state; the most efficient way to extract it was by a work unit represented by such households as those of Ki-in-kumi, or Tu'untalumi, with the old remarried widows directing the young women and the hunting and fish spearing being done by the younger males.

Even the smallest households nearly always contained at least one old female veteran of the food quest who knew the bush like the palm of her hand and could wrestle some food out of the most inhospitable district. The only households that ever went hungry—and they only overnight or at worst for twenty-four hours or so—were the small households of only one or two wives, especially if both wives were young and inexperienced or young and flighty or both. Such households were uneconomic and were rare. On the other hand, the apparently absurd households such as those in which two young men shared their respective elderly mothers as wives, made good economic sense. Any attempt by two such young men to substitute two young wives or even four young wives for the two old ladies would have drastically reduced the standard of living of the household. When young wives arrived in Tiwi households they were not regarded as replacements for the old crones but joined as reinforcements and apprentices to the skilled workers—the veterans. The sexual aspects of marriage were necessarily subordinated to the housekeeping or food-production aspects, which is why in the previous section we spoke of every young man laying the foundation of his household by marrying an elderly widow usually long before there was any young wife in sight.

Since the bigger the household the more food it produced for its own consumption, there was a tendency for the smaller and therefore hungrier households to hang around the fringes of the bigger ones. Though every household was autonomous and could camp and collect food anywhere in the band territory in which it roamed, it was rare to find all the households in a band distributed evenly over the available territory. In Malau, Enquirio's household and that of Merapanui were usually to be found camped together, since the two men were full brothers and not in competition with each other. Also camped with or near them on any given occasion would be a few other small households. Such a combined group as this would, all told, amount to between forty and fifty people camping at the same spot and remaining together for weeks at a time. Under mainland conditions in most areas, a gathering of forty people for ten days at a time in the same locality was unheard of, except on

[3] As was pointed out earlier, the best-watered and most fertile areas of the mainland were the areas attractive to white settlement, and the tribes who inhabited such areas (for example, Victoria or coastal Queensland) were wiped out quickly. Most of the mainland tribes who survived long enough to be studied by modern anthropologists were tribes whose habitats were unfavorable both for native and for white occupation.

2: Mountford E-5 (1954) 1958
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a, *a* (the black areas), indicate stony hills near her camp in the upper world; and the dots on the background, the stars, *tapalingas*, which live in the upper world with the lightning woman.

The Cat-fish Woman, Pirilouknla at Pirilou

Pirilou, on the upper Goose Creek swamps, is the totemic place of a mythical cat-fish woman, *Pirilouknla*. She was sent by *Tukimbini* to create both the totemic country and the food necessary for the natives to live on it, i.e., geese, brolgas, ducks, freshwater goannas, turtles, waterlily bulbs, red and white fruited *Eugenia* trees, and the various kinds of yams that prefer the damp soil.

On Pl. 10C, the darker crossed circles are the black, and the lighter, the white rocks at Pirilou. Panels, such as *a*, symbolize the trunks of the paper-bark trees growing in the swamp; *b*, the many waterlilies on its surface, and the white vertical lines on the background, streams of fresh water in the swamp-lands.

The Fish-woman, Wuringa, at Arangu

Tukimbini sent the fish-woman, *Wuringa*, to establish a camp at Arangu, in Curtis Haven, northern Melville Island. Later, *Wuringa's* camp was transformed into a group of flat rocks which are uncovered only at low tide.

Wuringa created the aboriginal foods of the area, turtles, crabs, fish of all kinds, yams, cabbage palms and hives of wild honey.

Two bark paintings illustrate Arangu and its surroundings, Pl. 11C and Pl. 11D.

On Pl. 11C, *a*, is a long submerged reef at Arangu; *d*, *d*, *d*, smaller submerged rocks; *b*, *c*, long sand-bars, while at *e*, *e*, are jelly fish. The remainder of the ovals are oysters on the rocks at Arangu.

On Pl. 11D, *a*, is the totemic place, Arangu; *b*, represents the soft friable boulders near by; *c*, a large rock on the coast; *d*, wave breaking over it; *h*, white sand on the beach, and *j*, the sand and gravel on the sea bottom.

Symbol *e*, indicates black trepang; *f*, *f*, white trepang; *r*, an especially large trepang; *n*, a jelly fish, and *m*, a bed of oysters. At *k*, are many pearl shells, and at *s*, *s*, conch shells. A deep channel in Curtis Haven is indicated at *p*, a yellow rock under the water, at *o*, and the seaweed growing on the rocks at Arangu, by the lighter-coloured dots on the background.

2: Mountford E-5 (1954) 1958
OI20 Tiwi OI20

lines as flying foxes (the totem of *Nulatini's* father),[66] their arms moving alternately up and down and their little fingers pointed skyward (Pl. 30c).

The dance finished, the assembled men accompanied by *Pulanimbuwi* and *Tupiatira*, with their arms around each other's necks, mourned hysterically for the dead, while the women danced the *amburu* on the outside of the group. Several times, in his grief, *Tupiatira* collapsed to the ground only to be lifted to his feet again by the still mourning husband.

The sounds of mourning continued for some time, gradually becoming less until *Nangrinini* gave the honey and mosquito calls, and the ceremony was over.

(*b*) *The Ilanis*

At one end of the *milimika*, which was situated at the camp of the dead woman, was a pole on which *Pulanimbuwi* had tied a piece of printed calico as a flag.

The *ilanis* opened when seven of the "workers" giving the honey and mosquito calls, emerged from the forest, and, running toward the *milimika*, cast sticks and pandanus leaves, as spears, at the *pukamuni* men who awaited them. There was general fighting and much laughter before the "workers" were ejected.

In the centre of the *milimika*, as food for the "workers" a woman had placed nine large cooked crabs which the "workers" distributed among themselves. After this was done, the men performed the rite of *wandiatapinda* by either walking through or jumping over the fire which had been lit in the *milimika*. *Nulatini's* husband did not take part in this ritual but, with a flat fighting stick in either hand, wandered about the ceremonial ground, singing the *amburu*.

Following these rituals, the aborigines chanted a number of songs and carried out the following dances, those of the flying fox being totemically related to the dead woman's father.

(i) The flying foxes and the sea-eagle.
(ii) The crocodile.
(iii) The shark and the stingray.
(iv) The flag songs.

(i) *The flying-fox and sea-eagle songs*

"The flying foxes are out late, eating the blossoms of the stringy-bark and eucalyptus trees."

[66] As mentioned earlier, the totem of the dead person is never referred to in the *pukamuni* rituals.

2: Mountford E-5 (1954) 1958
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The yellow bands encircling the face and eyes, and stretching from the forehead to the base of the nose, all symbolise the dreaded *Marogi*; the white cross-hatching represents the thunderstorms of *Pukadringa*.

The Salmon, Kumuniu

Pl. 28*r*, the *pukamani* decorations on the face of an aboriginal, are the same as those used by the mythical salmon-man, *Kumuniu*, who, at the first *pukamani* ceremony, fought with *Tudawale*, the shark-man (Pl. 28*c*). The present-day fish still carries the marks of that encounter on his head.

The March-fly, Kudjatumpi

Pl. 28*o* is the facial pattern of an aboriginal belonging to the March-fly totem of Kudjatumpi, southern Melville Island (p. 58).

The black discs symbolize dark-coloured stones which formed on the footprints of *Kudjatumpi*, the small white and yellow dots, an edible plum, *murumbatuna*, and the white lines, the limbs of the tree on which the fruit grows.

The red lines in the design represent the strata of red rocks at Kudjatumpi, which were created when the woman squeezed the milk from her breast and allowed it to run down the face of the cliff. All these things happened at Kudjatumpi after the March-fly woman had returned from the *pukamani* of *Purukupali*.

The Boobook Owl, Purujiitini

The design on Pl. 28*n* was used in one of the *ilanias*. The white ears refer to *Purujiitini* the boobook owl, and the lines on the face to its feather patterns.

The Barn Owl, Pintoma

Pl. 28*j* is the facial decorations of *Wurarbui*, the *alowia* of the *pukamani* ceremony of *Waniamperi*. He is wearing the false beard, *baladi*, and the head-dress of cockatoo feathers, *primitiki*. The design on his face, particularly the rings around his eyes, symbolize *Pintoma*, the barn-owl woman, who assisted her husband, *Purujiitini*, the boobook owl-man, at the first *kulama* ceremony (see dance of *Pintoma*, Pl. 29*a* and frontispiece).

The Ningaui Men

The facial design on Pl. 28 *o* resembles that used by the *Ningaui* men when they performed the second *kulama* ceremony on Turiturina Island (p. 124). The yellow dots are the cockles in the mangrove swamps on Western Bathurst Island, one of the foods of the present-day *Ningauis*.

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2: Mountford E-5 (1954) 1958
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[88] had worn continuously their curious ornaments, *mariguani* (Pl. 42G),[81]
[301] around their necks as well as many cane and bark ornaments on their arms. During the whole of that period (about five months) they renewed their body paint continuously. They were not allowed, however, to scratch their heads with their hands, but must use for that purpose a special pointed stick, *murubunga* (Pl. 32F).

The rituals began when one of the *Mikingulas*, coming up behind the male
[302] *Kilipaniati*, cut the *mariguani* from the neck of the initiate, poured water over him to remove his body paint, and decorated him with the design of a *W'adjeniati* (Pl. 42H). Similarly, the husband of the female initiate cut her neck ornament, washed her and redecorated her as a *W'adjeniatinga*. After eating their store of cycad fruit, these new initiates resumed the normal life of the tribe.

About mid-November, thunder and other signs of the oncoming wet season are signals for the *Marukumuni* to discard the design he has been wearing since the ceremonial eating of the cycad fruit. As soon as this hap-
[301] pens the men paint another design on his body (Pl. 42D), put new cockatoo
[302] feathers in his hair, and many cane armlets on his arms. The initiate wears these decorations, continuously renewing his body paint, until the ceremonial eating of the edible yam, which takes place at the beginning of the *kulama* ceremony about four months later.

3. THE KULAMA CEREMONY

(1) *Collecting and Eating the Edible Yams*

Toward the end of January, when the wet season was approaching its climax, the *kulama* leader instructed the women to go into the jungle, locate a number
●[262] of the young plants of two species of edible yams, a long one, *jurugani*, and a short one, *karawani* and show them to him so that he would know when they would be ready to eat.

When some weeks later, the leader estimated that the yams were fit for digging and the tall, annual grass was about to shed its seed, he called the people together and told them that the *kulama* rituals would start in a few days.[82]

[81] Spencer, 1928, Pl. ix, No. 4, illustrates a *mariguani*.

[82] From the time of this announcement until the finish of the *kulama* ceremony, no
[834] fully initiated man, must sleep with his wife. If he does, he will be attacked by *tsini*, the mysterious *kulama* sickness, and die. I did not find out the characteristics of the *kulama* sickness.

3: Hart E-5 (1928-1929) 1930 OI20 Tiwi OI20

not only in physique but also in intelligence. I should be surprised to find in any other Australian tribe a man with the intelligence and adaptability of my own head boy Mariano.

The flora and fauna of the two islands is very similar to that of the rest of the Northern Territory. The country is mostly flat with a low range of rocky hills between Cape Gambier and Cape Keith on Melville Island, and a still lower range in the centre of Bathurst. The timber consists of the usual Australian trees; gums, stringy-bark, woolly-butt, bloodwood and ironwood cover most of the two islands, broken here and there by patches of open grassland and in other places by dense patches of jungle where snakes and "devils" thrive and the natives seldom enter. Wallabies are extraordinarily plentiful, but there are no kangaroos. Buffaloes are found on Melville in small numbers. These are the wild descendants of the domestic Indian buffaloes imported for agricultural purposes by the early settlers at Fort Dundas. At one time they had increased and multiplied to such effect that thousands were shot every year without any appreciable effect upon their numbers. At the present time, however, probably owing to many of the cows being killed, there are probably not more than a thousand on the island. The natives are seldom able to kill a buffalo though they realise the fact that it is good to eat.

Not only are wallabies plentiful, but there is also an abundant supply of the other native articles of food, fish, crocodile, birds of all kinds, wild honey, yams and other native vegetables. As a result of this abundance of foods, it would seem that the two islands had a greater density of population than is to be found in almost any other part of Australia.

LOCAL ORGANIZATION

The people inhabiting Melville and Bathurst Islands are subdivided into a number of local groups. These local groups are the important sections of the population since they act as land-owning groups, war-making groups, have a solidarity of their own which is far stronger than any tribal solidarity that may exist and even to some extent regulate marriage.

Before considering these hordes in detail, however, something must be said about the tribal name. All the hordes practise the same customs, speak the same language and inter-marry. The boundaries of the people speaking this language are of course strictly defined by the sea. In other words, the people of Melville and Bathurst have a solidarity of their own,

5: Basedow D-5 (1911)1913 OI20 Tiwi OI20

piece of the former fold are clasped between the fingers and thus used as a cup the part lying opposite to the fingers being held to the lips.

Honey Eating.

In my notes on the north-western tribes of the Northern Territory I have described[1] a honey-collecting implement and there, also, referred to somewhat similar observations made by Dr. Wilson[2] and Keppel.[3]

On Bathurst Island I observed still another modification. A young flower-stalk of the fan-palm (*Livistonia humilis*), when about 50 to 70 centimetres long, is cut just above the trunk of the palm and its bottom end chewed until all the fibres are separated and look like the hairs of a brush. The juice, being quite sweet, is swallowed. The brush end is then inserted into the nest of the wild bee (*Trigona sp.*), whereby the honey gathers between the fibres. When saturated with honey, the brush end is passed back to the mouth and again sucked and chewed for a considerable time, after which it is once more returned to the honey for a fresh supply, and this is continued to repletion.

Tree Climbing.

Both male and female, young and old, are expert tree-climbers when in pursuit of game, honey of the wild bee, fruits, and seeds. As none of the trees on the islands grow to an abnormally large size, the butt is usually not too great in circumference to allow of the arms being thrown around it, so that the hands may obtain a firm hold on the side distant from the climber. Having obtained this hold while standing on the ground and facing the tree, the native jumps on to the butt, clutching it with the flat surfaces of his feet in a frog-like fashion. The knees in this position stand well outwards. The body hangs, suspended by the arms above and held against the tree by the legs below. The climber now raises his body; his hands quickly follow by a corresponding distance. Holding on with the latter he draws up his legs in a jumping manner once more to clutch the tree between the soles of his feet. This movement being repeated, he rapidly advances upwards.

Hunting and Fighting.

Throwing-sticks and clubs.—Several types of throwing-sticks and clubs are in use. They must be referred to under this general or collective heading, since it is hard to discriminate between the two implements and to say definitely where the throwing-stick ends and the club begins. They form an interesting group of Australian implements and weapons that allows of a satisfactory system of

[1] *Trans. Roy. Soc. S. Australia*, vol. xxxi, 1907, p. 96, Fig. 19.
[2] *Narrative Voyage Round the World*, 1835, p. 99.
[3] *A Visit to Indian Archipelago*, 1853, vol. 2, p. 168.

884 tive, community ceremony, its benefits accrued only to individual participants, and then only to those who had followed the complex procedures correctly. Thus it was vitally important to every Tiwi individual, male or female, to receive instruction in the *Kulama* ritual before being considered a fully adult member of the tribe. The instruction period lasted six years, during which the initiates, among other requirements, had to participate actively in six *Kulama* rituals. Following this training, the individuals were considered responsible adults by other members of the tribe, but only through continued participation in the ritual could that condition be maintained.

[178] TODAY the ritual is still performed by those who believe in it, and it will probably continue until the last initiated Tiwi dies, or until the underlying meaning is totally lost and is replaced by ideas of how to be successful that have their origins in Western thought.

[262] [252] The ceremony itself takes three days to complete and centers on the preparation of a toxic variety of yam, the *Kulama*. To make this yam edible, it must first be soaked. It is then baked, mashed, and again soaked for a time in fresh water. Even after the poisons have been removed by this elaborate process, an extremely bitter taste remains. The Tiwi say they never eat the yam except at the conclusion of the *Kulama* ceremony. Those who believe in the [178] ritual say the yam has tremendous power for causing good or evil, and thus one must handle the yam carefully during the preparation, speak to it softly, sing to it at times, and always treat it with respect. The individual absorbs the power of the yam by touching it, by rubbing the body with it, and finally by eating it. All these steps are ritualized. [262] Special digging sticks are made, and, contrary to the usual practice of having the women gather plants, only men

[TEXT CONTINUES ON P. 13(B)...Quelyn]

[P. 12, (C)]

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YOUNG GIRL AND BOY accompany fathers as men bring yams from pool to the ceremonial ring. There the yams will be

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part of Tiwi speech. Poetic license in pronunciation and syllabification often occurs. The Tiwi have high regard for the linguistic ability needed to become a good Tiwi composer and singer, and instruction in the art of song composition and delivery is given to the initiates. Each initiate must perform in the *Kulama* before he can be considered a "graduate." According to my Tiwi informants, this requirement is the hardest of all, and it is also the reason for there being no set age for initiation. The old people are said to watch the young, and when the observers consider them mature enough, they swoop down upon their choices "like chicken hawks, without warning"—as the Tiwi say—and start the initiates along the path to adulthood.

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As far as I know, the *Kulama* ceremony has no parallel elsewhere in Australia. And there are many interesting questions that come to mind concerning the origin of the *Kulama* as it exists today. For instance, why is instruction in the preparation of a poisonous yam that is not part of the daily diet considered so important for initiation into adulthood? What is the origin of the idea that a yam has power over good and evil, and health and sickness? Why is such prominence accorded a yam in what is principally a hunting and gathering society?

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Any answers to these questions must be highly speculative, for the origin of the ceremony and its development lie in the unrecorded history of the Tiwi. However, I believe the following statements may well be valid.

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Instruction in the natural resources of the land was considered vital to becoming an adult. Because the *Kulama* yam is poisonous and is not widely distributed, it was never part of the regular diet, but it could be used in economic emergencies if properly prepared. Instruction in its preparation was therefore extremely important as a potential survival measure. However, since the Tiwi live in a favorable environment, it is highly probable that such emergencies were very rare, so it was considered expedient to hold annual instruction periods. Because knowledge of

[See P. 15(A) for other part of caption and picture -- analyst]

under the surface by the massive roots of the paperbarks. It was in just this sort of pool that the largest of the five crocs landed that night, was harpooned. The huge 18-foot animal dived into the roots and it took about twenty tense minutes to dislodge and dispatch him. Aside from the crocodiles the only wild life seen that night was a small and very frightened little mouse who suddenly appeared on my lap and then just as suddenly disappeared over the boat's side.

We returned to Minianapi at daybreak and the hot tea and roast goose seemed a perfect breakfast, or was it supper? It didn't matter for we were soon sound asleep.

When we finally awoke in mid-afternoon we found the camp almost deserted. "Everyone go walkabout; kill geese," Albert informed us as he and Agnes gathered more wood to build up the smouldering fire. It was very quiet in the small clearing and only the little black spots of charcoal spaced in irregular intervals on the ground were evidence that there were more than our mob in residence. The clearing itself was quite bare because it had been burned by the first comers, with the double purpose of clearing out the four-foot grass itself, and any of the various poisonous snakes which were quite likely to infest it. In back of the clearing was a thick tangle of low bushes through which ran a little foot-path. Agnes started down this path carrying a billy can and I offered to go with her, but Albert said, "No, by um by we go, him long way, him only get a little bit now." After one gets used to the pronoun "him" being used to refer to everything animal, vegetable, and mineral, this phrase is perfectly understandable: the first "him" referred to the water, the second to Agnes.

So instead of collecting water, I wandered down to the river bank where Billy-Two, Brownie, and a few of the other men, were busy skinning the crocodiles. This they did by cutting the skin first around the head, then down either side of the rows of bumps running along the spine to the tail. The skin was then carefully peeled and cut from the body. Once free it was rubbed with salt which would act as a preservative until such time as the supply boat would arrive to carry it to Darwin. There the skins would be sold to the dealer and the proceeds credited to the hunter's account or sent in the form of hard cash to the settlement for distribution. Now they were folded into bundles and loaded into the launch, and large

12:Goodale E-5 (1954) 1957 O120 Tiwi O120

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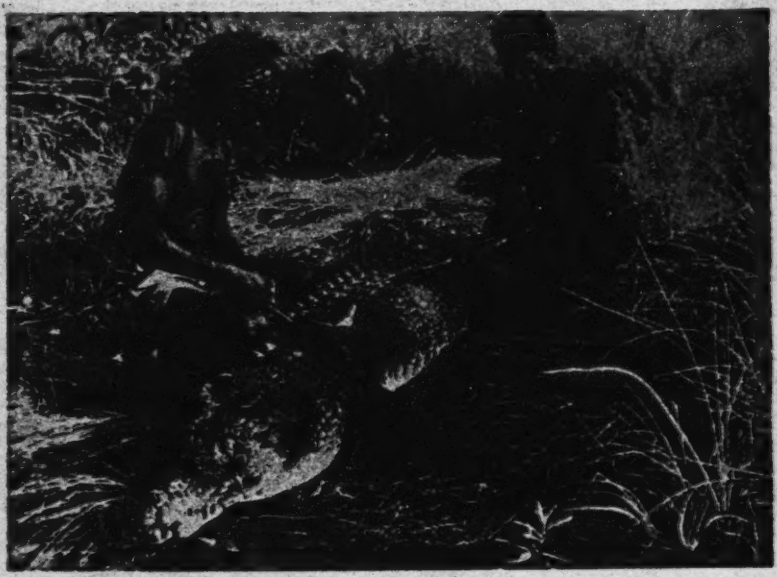

Fig. 10. Skinning a large crocodile

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pieces of the white meat were carried into the camp to be roasted for dinner. What was not to be consumed that night was thrown into the water, for meat spoils quickly in this sticky climate.

Darkness came early, and with it came the return of the goose hunters and the departure of the launch with the Grimsters and their crocodile team. Once more they would spend the night hunting crocodiles, this time downstream on their way back to the settlement. Soon many little fires broke up the darkness of the clearing and the smell of fresh roasting meat wafted over to where Albert, Agnes, Jack, and I were opening cans of corned beef. "Tomorrow we go bush," Albert remarked and I heartily assented.

Young Brook, a lean young man, and his wife, Alice,

ping the axe with his teeth, he ran up the sapling on all fours with as much agility as a monkey. Upon reaching the crotch, he put his arms around the trunk, placed the soles of his feet close together against the bark, and quickly progressed in a sort of leaping motion up to the top of the tree. Once there he casually climbed up, over, and around the various branches, until he reached the object of his climb, the hollow branch with the little hole through which was passing a steady stream of small insects. This branch was quickly cut through and fell crashing to the ground. Soon Albert was down again, investigating this find with Agnes and me. The hole was enlarged and the combs of dark honey exposed, still crawling with the little black bees. We dug in with our fingers or brushes made by chewing small twigs, quite unmindful of the bees, who obligingly never developed stings in this part of the world. The honey was dark and very strong, but when mixed with the dry, crumbly, yellow "bee bread" a nice balance of taste was obtained. It took the three of us very little time to finish the sugar-bag and off we went—this time in a homeward direction.

The one possum looked very small and Albert again began muttering about "someone *mobuditi* make me bad luck." We separated again and when almost to the creek Agnes suddenly held me back and cautioned silence. Carefully she picked up a stout stick from the ground and then approached what I suddenly noticed was a very fat goana, about two feet long, apparently sound asleep on a nearby tree trunk. One quick blow and the lizard fell to the ground, quite dead. We carried the catch to the landing and quickly had another swim before Albert caught up. We were gathering firewood when Albert arrived and explained his delay by holding up another possum. The second possum was immediately gutted, then both were laid on the fire and turned frequently until all the fur had been burned off and the skin made brittle. The animals were quartered and laid again on the fire until well roasted. The goana received no preliminary treatment before going on the fire. When all were cooked, they were removed and laid on a "table" of clean, green leaves, and we reached in and tore off pieces of the steaming, juicy meat. It is impossible to describe this meat to someone who has not tasted it. All I can say is that it was tender and tasty and perfectly

12:Goodale E-5 (1954) 1957 OI20 Tiwi OI20

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Fig. 20. Althea and Crissy-boy showing me the large snake which Filicy had killed

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262 cooked, with that delicious charcoal-broiled flavor so much sought after in our more elite dining establishments or in our backyards.

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224 Just as we had started our feast the other group arrived and soon had their fire started. Although no overt comparison of each other's catch was made, it was quite obvious that their hunt had been more successful. Besides the half dozen possums and two goanas, they brought over to show us an extremely large water [431] snake about ten or twelve feet long. Shortly, Filicy again came [513] over and presented us with one of their possums. After this tremendous feast, everyone stretched out and went to sleep, rousing only in time to arrive back at Minianapi in time to meet the geese.

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484 All the way back in the canoe, Crissy-boy played with two hairless baby possums, creating quite an uproar as he put them in everyone's hair where they clung with their tiny feet. They died before we reached the shore and were thrown into the water. Althea was

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boomerang, is unknown to the islanders. Ceremonial customs, language, origin, and burial rites all differ from those of the mainland tribes, and constitute an interesting study for anthropologists. They are the only aborigines who erect memorials on the graves of the departed, and, in the forest beside the aerodrome, you may see a typical grave surrounded with queerly-carved ironwood totem-poles. The poles, some eight feet in height, are carved in varying patterns. They had been painted in highly decorative designs with red, yellow, and white ochre, with black bands of charcoal to give sharp and artistic contrast. Each kindred totem to that of the deceased must place a pole at the grave. Failure to erect a pole is supposed to signify that no sorrow is felt for the death, and punishment will follow. Something unpleasant always *does* happen to those who neglect this duty.

AFTER these necessary digressions, let us return to my visit to the mission station. We followed the fathers over the stile, up an avenue of palms, and on through the garden, where pineapples and bananas grow, and there are rows of immense and beautifully shady mango-trees. Sturdy, fuzzy-headed aborigines strode in front (one of them had just come in with a couple of kangaroos for the larder), and the boys trooped along behind us. The quarters of the fathers are very much those of bachelors, perfectly bare, with guns in the corners and a few native weapons and curios hanging on the walls.

Here two lubras brought us morning tea, and here I learnt much of the foregoing matters. The fathers themselves are entertaining men of the world, and their white cricket shirts and khaki slacks gave no indication of their calling. The boys gathered at the foot of the steps leading up to the quarters, and every now and then black-bearded Father McGrath would banter them in their own language. Like all the native peoples

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